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THE
C A S E
OF THE
OPPOSITION.

THE
CASE
OF THE
OPPOSITION
Impartially Stated.

He that has Ears to hear, let Him hear!

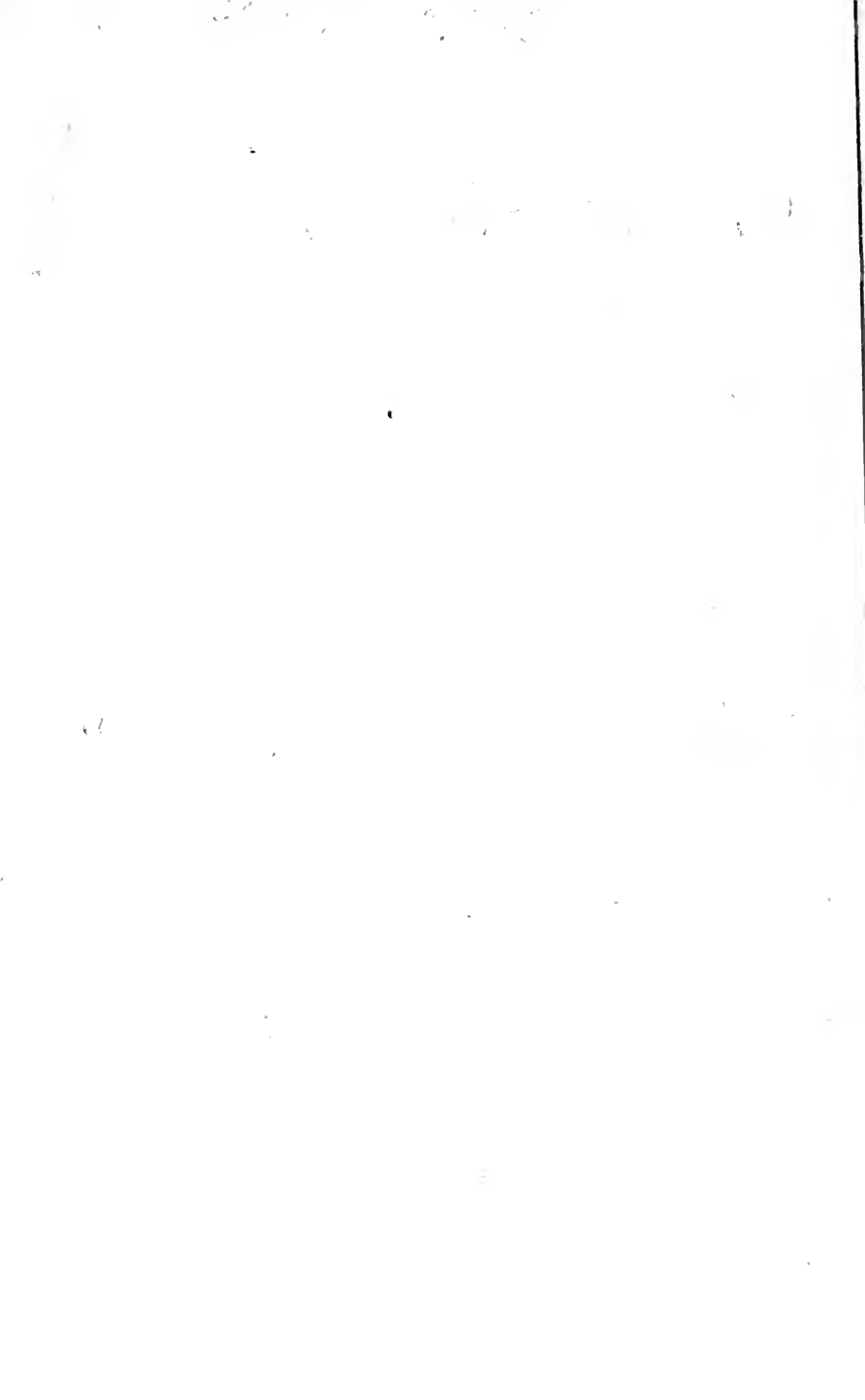
By a GENTLEMAN of the *Inner-Temple.*



L O N D O N:

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THE
C A S E
OF THE
OPPOSITION.



HERE is a single Point in which all Parties, how much soever they differ about other Things, unanimously agree; and it is this, that nothing can be of more dangerous Consequence at this critical Juncture, to this Nation, than *the continuing of our Divisions*. Indeed there requires no great Penetration to discern this, since every body knows and confesses, that our Debts, our Taxes, and in reality every other Evil, the Weight of which we feel, and of the Burthen of which we complain, have been all brought upon us by our Divisions. It cannot therefore but be an acceptable Thing to state the Case truly, and to shew the Grounds of our present Divisions, that every honest Man may know which Side to chuse, and by going over to that Side, preponderate the *Scale* of Justice and Equity, since

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what *Solon* made a Law in *Athens*, will remain a true political Maxim amongst every free People; that in Debates which regard the Constitution, every Man ought to take either the one Side or the other. In Matters of small Moment, we may be indifferent; but here, where both Parties confess our ALL is at Stake, we are bound to make our Choice. To be *Lukewarm* in the *Cause* of our *Country*, is to be *against* it.

It is now somewhat more than twenty Years; that a certain Party hath subsisted amongst us, under the Title of *the Opposition*; they have at certain Times been composed of very different People, and consequently have been considered in different Lights; but the proper Characteristic of the Party, and that from which it derives it's Name, is the *Opposing* of *Power*, or endeavouring to circumscribe in Parliament the Grants of Money and Extention of Authority, which have from Time to Time been demanded by several Administrations. Now, if this Scheme of Opposition has been right with Regard to the Interest of the Nation, that is to say, if the People of *Great-Britain* would have been Gainers, by putting in Practice what the Persons from Time to Time concerned in this Opposition propos'd, then, without Question, the Design of the Opposition is *right* upon the whole, though at particular Times, and by particular Persons, it might be prosecuted on *wrong Motives*.

It is necessary to make this Distinction between the Scheme supported by the Party, who have formed the Opposition for so many Years, and the private Views of particular Persons, who have at certain Times engaged therein, because the common
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Topick of Reproach into which the Writers on the Side of Power unanimously run, is this ; that Men have often contradicted themselves, and notwithstanding the Language they have made Use of when *out*, have avowed quite opposite Doctrines when *in*. Now the plain meaning of this, is no more than that particular Persons have had great Failings, and have in *different Scituations*, contend-ed with equal Vehemence for *different Things*. That this may, and ought to affect *them* I do not deny ; but certainly their Behaviour could no way affect *Things* themselves. If the Demands of the Administration for so many Years past, were just and reasonable, then all *Opposition* was *unjust* and *unreasonable* from whatever Quarter it came ; and on the other Hand, if the proposing a strict Examination into publick Affairs, a narrow Inspection of all the Pretences on which either Money or Power were demanded by Men at the Helm, was with respect to the Interest of this Nation *fit* and *right*, then the *Opposition* was always a *good Thing*, though possibly all who were concerned in it might not be *good Men*.

Such as have endeavoured to set the Conduct of those in the Opposition constantly in a *bad Light*, have found themselves under a Necessity of *misrepresenting* the Thing, and therefore the first Step to be taken in order to give such as are impartial a just insight into this Matter, is to render these Misrepresentations *manifest*, which is the Design of this Paper. *Opposition* in the Stile of some People, is a Term Synonymous with *Disaffection*, and great Pains has been taken to make the World believe, that none ever *oppose* a Government, who *wish well*

to it. But this is certainly begging the Question, and by proving *too much*, proves *nothing*. If we consider the Reason of the Thing, and take for our Guide a Maxim in which all Parties at present agree, *viz. That the End of Government is the Good of the Subject*, then it will appear very possible for such as *mean the Government well*, to *oppose* such as are in the *Administration* of it, unless it can be shewn, that Men vested with Power, have never aimed at *violating* their *Trust*, or that according to the Principles of our Constitution, *such* as have the *executive Part* of the Government in their *Hands*, are the *only fit Judges* how they ought to use it. But as these are Notions absolutely repugnant to Liberty and Common Sense, so they have been long ago exploded ; and therefore as I said before, all Circumstances taken in, it must be allowed that *Opposition* is not *malum in se*, or a direct and conclusive Proof of *Disaffection*, but quite the contrary.

Experience has verified this in all Reigns, and if we go no higher than the Restauration, it will be no hard Task to prove, that the *best Friends* of every Government, have at certain Times found themselves under a Necessity of *opposing it*. Every Body knows that the *Cavaliers* in the Reign of King *Charles II.* were against the Earl of *Clarendon's* Administration, and yet nobody ever imagined that they were *Enemies* to that King, or that they intended by their Conduct in this Point, any *Prejudice*, either to *his Majesty's Person* or *Government*. The Earl of *Clarendon* was certainly a very great, and a very deserving Man ; but he was likewise a very over-bearing, and a very opiniative Minister. I do not pretend to enter into the
Merits

Merits of that Opposition; it might be *right* in some Respects, and *wrong* in others: I mention it only to prove, that the best Friends to a *Prince* may think themselves obliged even by their being so, to oppose his *Ministers*. The *Cavaliers* in the same Reign, acted the same Part with respect to another Ministry, stiled the *Cabal*, and from the very same Motives. In the succeeding Reign, such as wished the King *well*, and *suffer'd* afterwards for their *Affection* to him, *oppos'd* his Measures with the greatest Firmness, and never thought themselves, nor have been thought by Posterity the *worse Subjects*, but the *better* upon that Account. They fore-saw that the *Steps* the *King* and his *Ministers* were taking, would prove *fatal* to the *Nation* and to *him*, and therefore they did all that lay in their Power to prevent their taking *Effect*; but they did this in a *legal* Way, either by an *Opposition* in *Parliament*, or by dutifully expressing their Sentiments in Petitions to his Majesty, when no Parliament was subsisting; and though they were *blam'd* and *persecuted* for this, at the Time they did it, yet their *Conduct* was justified by the *Event*.

After the Revolution, when the Nation was effectually cured of some political Prejudices, equally dangerous to Prince and People, there frequently appeared a *Spirit* of the same Kind among the *best Friends* to the Government, as it was then established. They remember'd what Measures were thought oppressive and unjust in *former Reigns*, and they opposed them in this. Mr. *Trenchard*, who wrote the *History of standing Armies*, was undoubtedly as true a Friend to the Revolution, and as desirous of supporting King *William's* Government, as any Man in the
Nation

Nation, and yet he thought himself at Liberty to cross as far as lay in his Power, the *Designs* of some of that King's *Ministers*, and to express as great a Concern for what he took to be the *true Interest* of his *Country*, as if the *Revolution*, in which he heartily concurr'd, had never happen'd. It must be confessed, and great Advantages have been taken from it, that there were at that Time Abundance of People who *join'd* in *opposing* the Government, because they were *disaffected* to it; but this bad Design of theirs could not operate on such Measures as were *right* in themselves; but they remain'd still *right*, though these People maintained them to be so from *wrong Motives*. Without Question, the opposing *standing Armies*; Increase of *publick Debts*, and making *secret* and *suspicious Treaties* with foreign Powers, were Acts very laudable in themselves, and not at all the less so because *ill Men* concurred in them. We live at such a Distance of Time as enables us to see that in these Points they thought *justly* and reason'd *right*. The Things they attempted to prevent, have had very fatal Consequences, and therefore it had been happy for the Nation if they had been prevented. To say that all who were embark'd in this Opposition were *Patriots*, would be certainly *false*; but then it would be as *false* to assert, that *none* were engaged in that Opposition but *Jacobites*. There will be honest Men and bad Men, sincere and insincere, of all Parties; but the true Way to judge of the Merit of any Party, is to consider its *Principles*.

In Queen *ANNE*'s Time, there were several *Oppositions*, and these carried on with great Heat and Passion; and yet such as were concerned in them, insisted

insisted, and many of them I believe with Justice, that none *wished better* to the Queen and her Government, than they did. In short, if we should pretend to take it for granted, that all such as have opposed the Administration were at least *concealed Enemies* to the Government under which they lived, we must run into a very gross Mistake, since none shewed greater Fidelity to the Crown at that Time, than such as acted against its *Ministers*. To sum up all, as no set of Men amongst us have scrupled to oppose at some time or other the Administrations under which they lived; this is a convincing Argument, that all Parties have thought it lawful, just, and expedient, no way derogatory to their Duty, no sort of Blemish to their Loyalty, and therefore we ought in this Respect, to prefer their concurring Testimonies to the warm Declamations of prejudic'd Persons, who would have us believe, that *Spite* appears in no Dress, more commonly than in that of *publick Spirit*. If therefore we must condemn *all Parties*, if we condemn *Opposition* in general, it is better to acquit *all*, and to confess that *Opposition*, as well as *Attachment*, is govern'd by Circumstances, and that as it is not impossible Men may *betray* a Government they *serve*, so on the other Hand, it is not improbable that *Zeal* for the *publick Service* may induce Men to *oppose* the Measures of such as are intrusted with the *Management* of *publick Affairs*.

From what has been said, it clearly and evidently appears, that there can be nothing more groundless than those Insinuations which we so frequently hear thrown out, as if Opposition could proceed from nothing else but a *Dislike* to the *Prince*
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upon the *Throne*: whereas, generally speaking, it may with much greater Propriety be referred to a *high Concern* for *his Safety*. Besides, according to our Constitution, and as we ought always to be consider'd, as a *free People*, Regard to the Nation, is Loyalty to the King; for such as pretend to make any Difference between *his* Interests, and those of his *Subjects*, may be his *Minions*, but can never possibly be his *Friends*. Such Persons for their own Interest may *mislead* him; but it does by no means follow, that because they *deceive* him, it becomes the Part of every good *Subject* to shut his Eyes; it having been long ago determined here, that Kings are to be consider'd in their *political Capacity*, in which as the Law supposes they *do no wrong*; so it must be understood, not to lay the People under any Necessity of *suffering Wrong*. These are Maxims that may be gathered from the *unrepealable* Parts of our *Constitution*, such as the *Bill of Rights*, and therefore in adhering to these it cannot, it ought not to be surmised, that Men depart from their *Duty*, since that would imply a Distinction between *Loyalty*, and the *Love of one's Country*, which can never happen under a *limited Monarchy*. The plain Meaning of the Term, being this, that the *Power* of the *Sovereign* is restrained by those *Laws* which have been thought necessary for the *common Benefit* of his *People*.

If we carry these Speculations a little farther, we shall soon meet with incontestable Proofs of their being *just* and *right*. The Happiness of a Prince can consist in only these two Points, being *easy at Home*, and *respected Abroad*. Now nothing can be clearer than that an *impoverish'd, corrupted*
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and *vicious* People must render their Monarch *uneasy*, because they can neither *support* his *Dignity* in a proper Manner, nor can he rely upon their *Fidelity*; and as plain it is, that a King in such Circumstance *at Home*, can never be considered as a *useful Ally*, or a *formidable Enemy* by his *Neighbours*. Whatever therefore contributes to the *reducing* any Nation into *such* a *Condition*, must contribute at the same time to the *Weakening* the *Authority* of the *Prince*. Forms and Appearances may possibly be preserved for a little while; but Time and Accidents will inevitably betray the *true State* of *Things* at last, and therefore the *opposing* such *Measures* as have a Tendency to exhausting the Wealth, breaking the Spirits, or corrupting the Manners of a whole Nation, is doing the *highest Service* to the *Sovereign*; however, *he* or *his Ministers* may conceive it, and such as pursue this Track, will sooner or later be known for his *best* and *truest Friend*, however they may be belied or misrepresented by *Court-Flatterers*, who have been always too frequent, and in too great Favour with *such Kings* as have given the Reins to their Passions, and endeavoured rather to gratify their own Inclinations, than to consult the *Interest* of *themselves* and their *Posterity*, which however, is a *Duty* incumbent upon *them*, as well as *other Men*.

These Things being premised, we shall next proceed to give a short Account of the *Rise* and *Progress* of the *present Opposition*. After the Affair of the *South-Sea*, abundance of Country Gentlemen who had no other *Business* in Parliament than to *serve* their *Constituents*, began to have their Heads full of melancholy Apprehensions, when they saw

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what a *Turn* that Affair took, and how the *Justice* of the *Nation* was eluded. They were surprized to see the Ease with which Men *united*, to serve their *own* Interests, who but a little while before, had *torn* each other's *Characters*, and express'd a Desire of *tearing* one another's *Persons* in *Pieces*. They thought it was a strange Time for such as had put themselves at the *Head* of the *Patriots*, to accept of *Places*, and began to have little Hopes of reaching the *Criminals*, when they saw the *Patrons* of those *Criminals* become both their *Prosecutors* and their *Judges*. The Manner of Mr. *Knight's* going off, alarmed them *then* as much as his coming home ought to surprize us *now*. In short, they saw through, and despised this *Juggling*, and from that Time to this, have had a strong *Aversion* to *SCREENS*.

These Reflections led them to suspect, that *publick* Affairs were not like to be managed with the *utmost* *Probity*, while in *certain* *Hands*. This induced them to be very assiduous in examining the annual *Proposals* to *Parliament* for granting *Money*, increasing the Power of *ministerial* *Officers*, and approving such *Treaties* as were made with foreign *Princes*. They knew the Nation laboured under a *heavy* *Load* of *Debts* and *Taxes*, and they were willing, if they had been able, to have paid off Part of the one, or to have taken somewhat from the other; but in this they hardly ever prevailed. They expressed a great Apprehension of *penal* *Laws*, because they saw that by an Extension of the *Excise*, the Tools of every Ministry would be the Masters of the Secrets, and consequently of the Credit of all the trading Part of the Nation. They grew
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the more jealous of these Laws, when they perceiv'd, that they were very negligently executed, because this very plainly shewed they were procured for *other Purposes*, than those which were *pretended*, since otherwise, such as press'd the *passing*, would have look'd with equal Care to their *Execution*. They were not a little suspicious, that the new Trade of *Negotiating* would be far from proving Advantageous to the *Nation*, and they were very much confirm'd in this Notion, when they saw *some Men* made Choice of for Ministers abroad, who could not so much as *make a Bow*; and others who had not *Capacity* enough to write a *common Letter*. Their Fears increased, when they found us meddling in *every Thing*, and they were equally Sollicitous about the *Honour* and *Safety* of the *Kingdom*, while its most important Affairs were intrusted to such a *Set of strange Politicians*. Such was the *Rise* of *this Opposition*, and such the *Motives* that engaged the *Gentlemen* who originally embarked therein, many of whom are still living, to resolve to exert themselves with Zeal and Diligence in the *Service* of their *Country*, without much Regard to their *crossing* the *Designs* of those by whom they thought she was very *ill served*.

At first setting out, this *Opposition* was considerable, only from the *known Characters* of those who *composed* it; their great Fortunes, and extensive Influence in their respective Countries; but by Degrees, it received considerable Accessions, and towards the End of the last Reign, it was become very formidable in point of *Numbers*. At the beginning, Gentlemen could scarce conceive that Persons of *high Rank*, and who were look'd upon as

Men of *great Parts*, could stoop to such *low* and *little* Things as were frequently charg'd upon the Administration; but when they saw with how much Industry all *Enquires* were avoided, with what an *Air of Insolence* the *Loss* of a *whole Branch* of the *publick Revenue*, merely through Negligence, was stiled a *pedling Affair*, and what a Point was made of *bringing off*, or *screening* every *little Offender*; they began to open their Eyes, and to discover an Inclination of looking more nicely than had been customary for many Years past into *publick Accounts*, which Inclination of theirs excited such a Vigilance on the other Side, as shew'd plainly this was a *fore Place*, and would not bear *touching*.

The Affair of the *publick Debts* seemed to be a Matter of such mighty Consequence, that all *Proposals* relating to them, were well *heard* by all who meant well to their Country, of what Party soever, and yet abundance of *rational Proposals* for putting them into a better Train of Payment were rejected upon plausible Pretences, till at length the *People* in *Power*, by a dextrous Application to the *Passions* of Men in the *monied* and in the *landed Interest*, brought Things into such a *Method*, as plainly shewed they never intended to Pay them at all. By applying the Produce of the Sinking-Fund to the Service of the current Year, this End was attained, and though the Nation suffered, a great Part of the Nation was made easy. This shewed the Consequence of raising Taxes lightly, and imperceptibly; for as it defended us from a *Land-Tax*, it drew many of the *Country Gentlemen* to think favourably of it; and as it defended such as drew
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large Interest from the *publick Funds*, against the Danger to which they were exposed, of being *paid off*, in case that *Fund* had remain'd *untouch'd*; they too were very well pleased, and thus a Stop was put to the only Thing that could have saved us from deep Distress, by *lessening* our Debts, and allowing us *ease* in our *Taxes*, and at the same Time an *immense Revenue* was left in the *Hands* of *Ministers* which enabled them to *provide* for, and *increase* their *Dependants*, till by degrees they became so *numerous*, and were so well *posted*, that their *servile Echo's* to their Masters *Demands* came to be almost as *loud* and *significant* too, as the *Voice* of the *Nation*.

The exposing of Abundance of *dirty Attempts* to get Money, and the pursuing even *successful Attempts* in *Parliament*, by *Hue and Cry* from the *Press*, till their Iniquity was made manifest to the *meanest Capacity*, brought Numbers to think more coolly and consistently than they would otherwise have done, and forc'd them, whether they would or not, to discern how *low* some great Men would stoop, and what vast *Loads* were to be heaped on the already overloaded People, in case the Majority of their Representatives continued to lend their Assistance in *lying* them upon their *Backs*. These Disputes, by being frequently repeated, enlarged even ordinary Understanding, and brought the *Arcana Imperii* within the Comprehension of the *common Sort of People*. This was complained of as a Kind of *Sacrilege*, a Breach of all *Decorum*, and a subverting the very *Foundation* of *Government*. Whereas, in Truth it was no more than delivering the People from that Sort of *Egyptian Darknes*,
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which State *Conjurors* so well know how to *raise*, in order to cover themselves. It was explaining a *Mystery* in which the People had a *high Concern* ; it was shewing them *how* their *Money* went, and *how* they were *fleec'd*, without *feeling* the *Sheers*. In short, it was doing by them, what any honest Man would do by a *young Heir* ; it was setting the *Arts* of these *smooth Cozeners*, in a proper Light, and taking Care to give the Nation *fair Warning* of the *Hands* they were in. A Practice every way *laudable*, notwithstanding its Tendency to destroy the *Respect* generally paid to *great Men*. Neither was this a *Fault* or an *Inconvenience*, but rather an *Advantage* ; for *Respect* is only due to *Benefactors* ; when the *Great* turn *Plunderers*, a *free People* owe them *somewhat else*.

In Time too, the *penal Law* began to be known by their *Fruit* ; all the *fine Promises* that had been made as to their destroying *Smuggling*, came to nothing ; since it was found, that those *Hardships* which bore so heavy on *honest Men*, never reach'd such as they were said to be *intended for*. It was frequently observed, that the sharpest of these *Acts* would *sleep* quietly for several Years, and *wake* regularly at the Approach of an *Election*. The Trading Part of the World, who at first promised themselves *Relief* from these subtle Contrivances, which they fancied would at least defend them from *Interlopers*, and put all who *paid the Duty*, on the *same Foot*, though a hard one, were quickly undeceived, and taught to their Cost, that *Hardships* once submitted to, are never to be *shook off*, though *Conditions* were talk'd of at the Time of the Imposition. A Concurrence of these Circumstances, occasioned *Bills* of this Na-
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ture to find a *slower Passage* than usual, there being none ready to *support* them, except such as found their *Account* in them.

Foreign Affairs took their turn in *publick Examinations*, and though at first it was hardly believ'd that a *British Administration* would enter into *Treaties* burthensome to *Britain*, yet when *Sessions* after *Sessions*, Measures of this Kind were *exposed*, their Motives *explained*, and their Consequences *foretold*, many who found the Gentlemen in the Opposition, *true Prophets*, began to think them *good Politicians*, especially when they saw that we frequently *chang'd Sides*, and that in Spight of these Changes, we were always on the *same Side* with *France*, though till then our *Interests* were held *irreconcilable*. Thus was that Strength gained, which render'd the *Opposition* so considerable at the Close of the late King's Reign, at the very Point of Time when some think he began to see Things in the *same Light* with the Gentlemen in the *Opposition*.

The Dawn of a *new Reign* inclined every Body to think, that Things would take a *new turn*, especially as they were now generally understood, and the King was known to be a steady Lover of Honour and Justice. Upon this, the *Opposition* laid down their Arms, and went with as great Eagerness to pay their Obedience to the new Monarch, as if they had been sure of *those Places*, which they never *expected*. They manifested their *Concern*, and even their *Complaisance* in many other Respects, purely to shew that their *former Conduct* was the Effect of *Principle*, not of *Prejudice* or *Selfishness*. But when it clearly appeared that the same Measures were still pursued, when a *Profusion* of *public Money*

Money was demanded as a Proof of *Affection* for the *Crown*, they readily return'd to the *Service* of their *Country*, and sacrificing all *Hopes* of *Favour*, resumed their former *Opposition* of whatever appeared to them injurious to the *Interests* of their *Constituents*.

The Force of this *Opposition*, was now so sensibly felt, that there was no longer any *trusting* to the *old Arts* of *Management*; but Recourse was had to *bolder Expedients*, and this with such *Success* for a Time, that it bid fair for destroying all *Opposition*, and for eradicating the *Hopes* of all who expected to redress Grievances by a *legal Method*. But as *Success* is very apt to make *bad Men* insolent, so many who earn their *Wages*, were *Fools* enough to grow proud of their *Service*, and to declare themselves as much the *Dependants* of ONE MAN, as if they had worn his *Livery*. This Imprudence contributed to the *Safety* of the *Society*, and like an *Eruption* in an *Epidemic Fever*, shewed plainly, that the *State* was sick at *Heart*. The *Expence* of maintaining such a Multitude of *craving Creatures*, grew daily greater and greater, and the Manner in which they *earn'd* their *own Livings*, came at last to be so *notorious*, that all who had a reasonable Share of *Wisdom*, and the least remains of *Honesty*, revolted at once, and by a happy Choice of *proper Representatives*, brought the Matter to a fair Issue, and demonstrated that the *Sense* of the *Opposition* was so far from being the Clamour of a handful of idle disaffected, or discontented Men, that it was in reality the *Voice* of the *People*, the Judgment of the uncorrupted, undeceived Part of the *Nation*, and this one would have thought, had been the *Period* of the

the *Opposition*, for hitherto the *English History* affords us no Instance of the Heads of a *victorious Party* going over to the *Vanquished*, adopting the *Maxims* they *disclaim'd*, disavowing their *old Principles*, and acting without Shame or Concern those *Parts*, which for many Years together they had made it their Business to *expose*. This *Wonder* was reserv'd for *our Time*, and the *Language* it has provoked, will in all Probability prevent such a *strange Sight* from being ever seen by our *Posterity*.

If the *Opposition* had been what many have affected to represent it, a *violent Spirit* rais'd against a *particular Person*, it ought naturally to have determin'd when *that Person* was removed from *Power*; but as it had in reality quite another Foundation, so those who are thoroughly acquainted therewith, cannot be much surprized at seeing this Event produce no *considerable Change* in this Respect. It may, however, be of very great Service to the Generality of the *People of England*, to explain this Matter thoroughly; and as I pretend to set the *present Opposition* in a *true Light*, I shall first shew how this Notion of its being *particularly* directed against *one Man*, came to be so commonly received: I shall next prove the *Weakness* and *Folly* of giving in to such a *Story*; and I shall afterwards account fairly for the *true Views* of the *Opposition*; which having once done, I shall think my Task perform'd, and leave it, as I apprehend, every *political Controversy* ought to be left to the free and *unbiass'd Judgment* of my *Countrymen*.

When one considers how great a Part of Mankind are govern'd by *Appearances*, and how few, how very few, are capable of looking to the *Bottom*

in such kind of *Disputes* as these, it is far from being difficult to conceive how this *false Opinion* came so generally to prevail. Two Things there were which gave so strong a Colour to this *Notion*, as might easily afford it *Credit* with the *Multitude*. In the first Place, this *single Person* had been in a Manner at the *Head* of the *Administration*, from the Time this *Opposition* began, and as the Measures they all along opposed, were strictly and properly speaking, *his Measures*, there is no great Wonder to be made, that with many, or most People, this *Opposition* might be thought *directed* against *him*. On the other Side, it must be allowed, that there was a *second Reason*, still stronger than the *first*; the Discovery of which we owe to Time, and it is this, That a considerable Party who had join'd the *Opposition*, and by their forwardness therein, in some measure, set themselves at it's *Head*, had really no other *View* than this, as appears by their *deserting* the *Opposition* as soon as it was accomplished; but that this never was the *Sentiments* of the *Party* in general, will appear to those who consider the *Pains* they took to *expose Measures*, not *Men*, and the *remarkable Instance* they gave of their being void of all *personal Resentments*.

The Instance I mean, is the famous Affair of the MOTION, which has been so often canvassed, and set in so many *different Lights*, though it was never yet perhaps considered in the *true one*. It was a measure, certainly well calculated, to serve the Purpose for which it was intended; it would have *removed*, had it succeeded, the *Man* who block'd up the Way of *some other Men* to *Power*. And it had at the same Time, an Appearance of
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*serv*ing the *Opposition*, so strong an Appearance, that many were drawn into it, who certainly meant well, and did not perceive the *real* Tendency of that *extraordinary Step*. But the *wisest* and *firmest* Men in the *Opposition*, could not be drawn into such a *Desertion* of their *Principles*. They could not be reconciled to a *wrong Method* of doing a *right Thing*. They were afraid of countenancing *arbitrary Power*, by such an *Act* of their *own*, and therefore chose to leave Things to *Time*, and the *judgment* of the *Nation* in a *new Election*, rather than push a particular *Man* in such a Way, as might seem to determine their *Dislike* to *Him* and *his Measures*, rather than to the *Measures themselves*, by whomsoever pursued. In this, they were certainly right, and this Mark of their high Spirit, true Generosity, and admirable good Sense, ought for ever to stop the Mouths of those, who would resolve *their Opposition* into an inveterate Aversion to a *single Person*.

There could not certainly be any Thing *wiser* in such as had the *Safety* of this *single Person* at Heart, than to propagate to the utmost of their Power this Notion, that the *Opposition* was form'd against *Him*, and against *Him only*. The *British* Nation in general, are too generous, too honest a People to take Pleasure in the persecuting from private Prejudices a *great Man*, merely because he is *Great*, and therefore the considering the *Opposition* in this Light, weaken'd its *Force*, and abated its *Credit* considerably. The same People took also a great deal of Pains to place this in still a stronger View, by representing the *private Character* of the *Person* they supposed to be the *But* of the *Opposition*, as every way aimable. He was in their Language,

the most *humane*, the most *benificent*, the most *courteous* Man living; and above all Things, they magnified that *Decency* and *Moderation*, with which he treated his Antagonist, and the *Calmness* he constantly preserved in *Spite* of all the *rude Attacks* that were made upon *him*. Add to this, that even an *Error* in their *Conduct*, contributed not a little to the *Success* of their *Design*; for instead of defending *Measures*, they constantly defended *him*, and by perpetually repeating this Story of the *Opposition's* being *personal*, which they were perhaps *weak enough* to *believe*, they at last hammer'd it into the Head of *many*, and at the same Time obliged the *Chiefs* of the *other Side* to act in such a Manner, as if the *Facts* they related, had been *true*. But the *Instance* I have mention'd, clearly refutes all these Pretences, and justifies the *Opposition* from any *Imputation* on this *Head*, since those who supported the *Motion* from *Principle*, did it upon this *Distinction*; that *Places* were no Man's *Biribright*, and consequently an Attempt to *remove* a Man from *them*, was no *Attack* upon his *Person*; while on the other Hand, such of the *Opposition* as were *against* the *Motion*, were *against* it, because they thought it *personal*, and in that Light, repugnant to their *Principles*.

The *Defeat* of this *Scheme* of the *Motion*, which the Friends of the late Administration, who were certainly no very *penetrating Politicians*, look'd upon as the *Ruin* of the *Opposition*, in reality *restor'd* it, and proved, as they might easily have foreseen, the *Ruin* of *themselves*. When Gentlemen came to consider seriously, and without *Passion*, on what *Motives* they had acted in that *Affair*, it appear'd clearly, that the *Project* of the *Motion* stood upon

too narrow a Bottom; since in reality their Business was to condemn a Series of *destructive Measures*; rather than to *strike at a single Man*, either in his *personal*, or *ministerial Capacity*. The former was altogether *consistent* with their *Principles*, as an *Opposition*; but the latter had such an *Air of private Prejudice*, as gave all their *Proceedings* an Appearance of *Faction*. It was therefore, no Wonder that after debating this Matter thoroughly among themselves, the *Issue* of the *Dispute* was a *closer Union* than ever. For when Men see that they *ALL* mean *right* in the *Main*, and that the Points about which they *differ* are prejudicial to their *common Interest*, it necessarily engages them to concur with their *utmost Force* in *those Things* in which they are *clear*, and to avoid differing in *lesser Matters* at least till the *main Thing* be carried. This then was the *Result* of their *Conferences* on that *Disappointment*, and thus borrowing *Strength* from their late *Defeat*, the *Opposition* became *firmer* and more *formidable* than ever, and this at a Time when *some short-sighted* Politicians consider'd them as *broken* beyond a Possibility of *rallying*, and thus they gained a double Advantage from the *Wisdom* of their *own Conduct*, and the *weak Judgment* of *those* whom they *opposed*.

The *Event* as I observed before, fully justified this Method of reasoning, and sufficiently shew'd the *Difference* between a *Personal* and a *National Opposition*. The Resolutions that had been taken to stick entirely to the *latter*, and to reject whatever carried the least Aspect of the *former*, operated at the very Beginning of the *Sessions*, and to the Amazement of such as expected to have seen the

the *Patriots* acting like *Hussars*, by sudden and violent Excursions, they appear'd a steady, well compacted *Phalanx*, which no *Art* could divide, and which no *Force* could break. All their Motions were equally regular, and well conducted, they stood firm upon every *Attack*, and push'd all at once whenever they gave the *Assault*. Instead of smart and lively *Harangues*, they confin'd themselves to short and weighty *Speeches*; they no longer dwelt on the *Overights* and *Miscarriages* of particular *Persons*, but upon the *Concerns* of the *People*; in short, they brought about a *Change* in the *Ministry*, by pressing for a *Change* in *Affairs*. While they continued in this Situation, they bore all before them, Ministerial *Arts*, and that kind of *Science* which I am ashamed to call by the *Name* fixed upon it, by the greatest *Master* therein, *Parliamentary Craft*, signified nothing, Victory declared on their Side, and the *Mighty* who had been so long used to *Conquest*, were forced to turn all their Thoughts on a *Retreat*. Such were the *Effects* of an *Opposition* acting upon *Principle*, governing all their Motions by a steady *Adherence* to the *public Interest*, and as steady a *Contempt* of *private* and *particular Advantages*. But alas! we must soon shift this *Scene*.

As too much *Success* had rendered the *Great* careless, and in the End impotent, so this sudden *Reverse* of *Fortune* brought them back to their *Wits*, and though it could not bring them back to *Power*, yet it did what was thought next to impossible, it broke their *Fall*. The Sight of approaching *Ruin* engaged them to change their former *Manner* of acting, and now they disclaim'd

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in their Turn all *personal Affection*, and pretended an extraordinary Zeal for the *Wbig Interest*. This, whether well or ill founded had a mighty Effect, it introduced a *new Spirit*, which supplied *Courage* to their *fainting Troops*, it engaged many to appear *warmly* in their *Service*, who were before *indifferent*, and if it did not *dispose*, it at least gave a *Colour* for *some* to *come over* to them who had *fought fiercely* on the other Side. As these Advantages were gain'd by a *Stroke* of *rational Policy*, so they were managed with the utmost Dexterity; and I am sorry to say, that Men who had never shewn any *great Abilities*, while in the *public Service*, discover'd extraordinary *Capacity* when in this critical Conjunction, they were reduc'd to think only of *serving themselves*. The Point most proper for this Purpose was, that which they pitch'd upon, for with great *Address* they shifted their *Defeat* from the late *Stand* of the *Opposition*, to the almost forgotten *Attempt* of the *Motion*; and as if *that* had produc'd this *surprizing Alteration*, the *Leaders* of a *rejected Project* were set at the *Head* of *Affairs*. This tho' it might satisfy them, satisfied no Body else, and the *Nation* was exceedingly amazed to see what once happen'd in *Italy*, when the *late King* of *Sardinia* was *General* in chief both of the *French* and *confederate Armies*, happen again in *Britain*, the *same Men* at the *same Time* being at the *Head* of the *Administration*, and of the *Opposition*.

It is not easy to describe the Effects of so strange a Revolution. In all great *Parties* there will be a *considerable Number* of *Persons* who from want of *sound Sense*, or *sound Principles*, will follow their
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Leaders at the *Expence* of their *Cause*, and go as their *Chiefs* direct, instead of *obeying* or perhaps *examining* the *Dictates* of their *Consciences*. This was the *Case* here, and a strange *Confusion* ensued, sometimes we saw a strong *Detachment* of *Patriots* charging on the *Side* of *Power*, and sometimes a formidable *Body* of *Courtiers* making a noble *Stand* in *Defence* of *Liberty*. In short, this was a *Season* when *wise Men* knew not what to say, and therefore we need not wonder, that *weak Men* knew not *what to do*. On the whole however this is certain, that *some Men's* Heads were more effectually *turn'd* by the *Acquisition* of *Power*, than the *Hearts* of others were dejected with the *Loss* of it. Yet to shew how *variable* Men are, and how much the *greatest* are govern'd by the *ebbing* and *flowing* of their *Spirits*, it may not be amiss to observe, that this *little Gleam* of *Success* distracted ONE who had recover'd his *Reputation* as to *Capacity*, by the *firmness* he had shewn on his late *Defeat*. Affecting *Airs* of *Triumph* at *going out* are as distasteful, and consequently as dangerous as the wearing an *Air* of *Insolence* when *in*, and the not adverting to this *plain Maxim*, produced such a *Spirit* as nothing else could have produced, and prevented that *Flame* from being *extinguish'd*, which he had so *artfully*, and hitherto so *successfully* laboured to *subdue*. I know I have deliver'd myself somewhat *obscurely*, but the *Facts* are *too recent* for me to run any *Risque* of being *misunderstood*.

A *Miscarrage* like this, which all but *thorough Politicians* would have esteemed a *slight one*, gave once more a *new Turn* to *Affairs*. The *Body* of
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the *Opposition* had again drawn themselves into pretty good *Order*, and this Accident brought back their *Heads*, or at least determin'd them to *decline* going entirely off so *soon* as they had first *intended*; but at the same Time, that this gave the *Opposition* some *Advantage*, by preserving its *Strength*, it likewise did it not a *little Prejudice* by *diverting* its *Measures*. In short, the *Dispute* became *Personal* again, and instead of inquiring by what *wrong Steps* the *Nation* had been *injured*, it was resolved to *enquire* what *wrong Steps* could be fix'd upon a *certain Person*. It would be no difficult Thing to shew that *he* suffer'd *much less* by this, than the *Opposition* itself. There was a great deal of Time wasted to very little Purpose, and in this Time that generous *Spirit* which had hitherto actuated the *Opposition* vanished by Degrees. Not to dwell too long on so *disagreeable* a *Subject*, the Issue of what at first was esteem'd a *national Affair*, became entirely *personal*, and that which had for a Time been consider'd as the most *solemn Scene* that had ever appear'd on a *political Theatre*, dwindled at length into a *downright Farce*. *Great Men* may be angry when they see themselves made the *Sport*, even of *little People*, but this will always be the Case while the *People* remain *free*, and their *great Men* descend to do *little Things*.

After running thro' as succinctly as we might the *History* of the *Opposition*, and setting the principal Events which have distinguish'd it from *other Oppositions* in their proper Lights, we come now to what is more material, and of far greater Consequence to the *Public*, *viz.* the Examination of the *Ends* of this *Opposition*, or to borrow for once the Lawyer's Phrase, we are now to look

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into the *Merits* of the *Cause*, and with that Earnestness which becomes *honest Men*, and that Fund of good Sense which has ever been allow'd us as *Britons*, to enquire whether the *Principles* of this *Opposition* conduce to *disturb* and *distress* this Nation; or whether properly pursued, they have not the strongest Tendency to *free* us from all our *Misfortunes*, and to silence the *Noise*, by taking away the *Causes* of our *Complaints*. This is to be the Business of the succeeding Pages, and this I shall treat as clearly and plainly as the Subject will bear, without straining *Facts*, or using a *declamatory Style*, which very little become an Advocate for *TRUTH*, whose *Charms* like those of a perfect Beauty, cannot be heightened, but may be easily *abated* by the Interposition of *Art*.

In the first Place then, we must learn to satisfy ourselves, whether the Nation really *suffers* under any *Difficulties*, or whether (as a very artful Writer would persuade us) we are only troubled with *political Spleen*. Now a Nation *suffers*, or at least may *suffer* several Ways; but particularly by these three, when *respect* to its Government *declines*, when it's *best Laws* are *worse executed*, and when *greater Sums* are levied for the *public Service*, than the *Fortunes* of *private People* can bear. By any, much more all of these Nation may be *enervated*, and brought to the *Brink* of *Ruin*, as the History of every one great *Monarchy* or flourishing *State* that is now decayed will sufficiently *prove*.

As to the *first* of these *political Maladies*, the Symptoms which usually attend it are *universal Uneasiness*, a general *Distaste* of *Power*, and a want of all *Reverence* towards every *Rank* of *Magistrates*. The ancient History of the *Hebrews* affords

as a short and excellent Definition of this Mischief; for whenever it reign'd amongst that People the Phrase used to express it is, *there was no King in Israel*, that is, *no Ruler* whose *Authority* was regarded, or whose *Decrees* were held sacred. In the ancient *Greek* Republics, there were *Magistrates* assign'd by the *Constitution* to watch over it, with a View to prevent this dangerous Disease of *State*. In *Athens* they were stiled *Archons*, in *Sparta*, *Ephori*, and so long as these did *their Duty*, the People never failed in *theirs*. But when these forgot their *Characters*, and endeavour'd to apply the *Power* vested in them to *private Purposes*, instead of the *public Service*, they soon lost their *Credit*, and the *State* its *Being*. The like happen'd to the *Romans*, when the *Tribunes* affected to be their *Princes*, instead of their *Protectors*, and brought the *Weight* of the *People* to bear intollerably hard upon that *Frame* of *Government*, which it had been their *Interest* to support. When the *Names* and *Shadows* of *useful Offices* only remain, and the *Ends* for which they were instituted are neglected, *Authority* is lost of Course, nor is there any Method of proving that *Government* was instituted for the Sake of the *governed*, more plain than this, that whenever it ceases to promote this *End*, it becomes the Object either of *Hatred* or *Contempt*. Of *Hatred*, if supported by an *armed Force*, of *Contempt*, if it be destitute of that *Guard*. This is a fair and candid Account of the *Matter*, drawn from *Reason* and *Experience*, by which Men arrive at *Certainty*, and not an artful *Deduction* of a precarious *Proposition* by the Help of *Rhetorical Flourishes*.

As to the *second* Distemper I have mention'd, it commonly discovers itself by a *boundless Propensity to Pleasure*, a prodigious *Relaxation of Principles*, and an *Epidemic Corruption of Manners*. The old Book I cited before has a wondrous pathetic Phrase for this Grievance, for as often as the People were in this Condition, they are said to *have done every Man what was right in his own Eyes*. How accurate, how expressive this Description! To follow the Dictates of *private Interest*, to pursue the *Projects* ^{plann'd} by our *Passions*, to run wildly into the *Gratification* of every sensual *Appetite*, or every idle *Whim* of a distemper'd *Imagination*, merely to indulge *ourselves* without Respect to *Society*, is that *kind of Disorder* which I meant to trace. When the *Bulk* of any *Nation* comes to be agitated by such a *Spirit*, it must necessarily follow, that however excellent their *Laws*, they must stand repealed in *Fact*, though they retain their *Places* still in their *Statute Books*. It was so at *Athens*, when she boasted herself the *politest* and the *freest State* in *Greece*. The City was adorn'd with the noblest *Buildings*, her Citizens were rever'd *abroad*, and appeared with the greatest *Eclat* at home; her Commerce was most *extensive*, her Fame at its *highest Pitch* when *Alcibiades* then a Boy, gave *Pericles* this wise Advice, that *since it puzzled him to make up the public Accompts, he had best study how he might avoid making them up at all*. The *Corruption* of the *Times* made it easy for him to carry this Scheme into Execution, and he *escaped* by plunging his *Country* into the *Peloponnesian War*, by which she was *undone* for ever. At *Rome* the Case was the same, when the *great Men* began to value themselves on a *fine Taste*, and an *immense*

immense Expence, instead of that *unblemish'd Probity* and *illustrious Poverty* by which their *Ancestors* were distinguished, Things quickly took a *new Turn*, and that glorious *Common-wealth* which had been the *Mistress of Nations*, and the *Sovereign* of the *World*, sunk into *Slavery*, the meanest and basest *Slavery*, becoming a *Prey* to the most *unworthy* of her *Subjects*.

As to the *last* of the *Cases* hinted at before, it's Marks are the most *evident* of all. A People affected thereby, feel the *Pangs* of *Poverty*, without discerning its true *Cause* ; because those who ought to *enquire* into, and *redress* their *Grievances*, employ all their Skill and Pains either to *stifle* or *Disguise* them. Such a Nation, sensible of *declining Trade*, ascribe it now to *one* Thing, then to *another*, and by injudicious Attempts to *rid* them of supposed *Burdens*, render themselves still more incapable of bearing *that Load* which they want the *Judgment* to shake off. Instead of *virtuous Industry*, there prevails amongst them a *fraudulent Dexterity* in coining artificial *Riches*, which serve to *conceal* their true Condition from *themselves*, and to defend for a while the most *cunning* amongst them, from the *Miseries* felt by the *most Worthy*. We have no Examples of this kind in *antient History*, but the Instances which occur in the *Memoirs* of later *Ages*, are too numerous to be so much as mention'd. The great Kingdom of *Spain*, has long groaned under this kind of *Oppression*. The *two* famous States of *Venice* and *Genoa*, have suffer'd their *Glories* to *fade*, and their Strength to be exhausted, by not attending in Time to this *Canker*, and I could name another *Republic*, which is at
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last become sensible of this *Evil*, though somewhat of the *latest*. Before I dismiss this Subject, I must observe, that this Sort of *Consumption* is unknown to *arbitrary Governments*. Under them, *Oppression* is a *Feaver*, the *Acuteness* of which quickly obliges their *Rulers* to have Recourse to *proper Remedies*, how little *Pity* soever they may have in their *own Natures*. There must be some *kind of Liberty* to nourish this *lingring Disease*, and to feed the *Patient* with *Hopes*, till the *Distemper* preys upon the *Vitals*.

If therefore the *Symptoms*, inseparable from these *Maladies*, are undeniably to be met with *amongst us*, we may very safely conclude, that our Condition is very *dangerous*, and that nothing can prevent it from becoming *desperate*, but timely *Attention*, and a speedy and vigorous Application of *proper Remedies*. For, as it is certainly false Practice, when *State Physicians* feed the Humour of their Patients, and encourage them in taking unnecessary *Medicines*, by favouring *vulgar Mistakes*, and nursing *imaginary Diseases*; so on the other Hand, it is as inexcusable to *possess* them with *false* Notions of their own *Strength*, and by furnishing them with *artificial Spirits* to keep them in perpetual *Exercise*, too violent perhaps for them even when in *full Health*, till their *Constitutions* are quite exhausted, and *Death* and *Despair* surprize them at once. When a *Nation* is in such Circumstances, those who *flatter* them *least*, are undoubtedly their *best Friends*, and such as are for going to the *Bottom* of Things, *better Physicians* than those, who for the Sake of their *own Profit*, and perhaps

a pretty large Share of *present Applause*, would content themselves with a *palliative Cure*.

In applying what has been already said to the *State* of our own Nation, I shall make Use of all that *Tenderness* and *Precaution* which so nice a *Subject* requires. In the *first* Place, then it is certain, that from the *Revolution* to *this Time*, the People have upon very many Occasions, betrayed a great *Disrespect* towards their *Governors*, and this not only against *particular Administrations*, but against the *Legislature* itself. The Pretence has always been the *ill Conduct* of their *Governors*, and that *this* in *all Cases* has not been a mere Pretence, will sufficiently appear if we consider that in some Part of King *William's* Reign, their *Dissatisfaction* to the *Ministry* was countenanced by the *House of Commons*, as in the *latter Part* of that *Reign*, their *Dislike* to the *House of Commons* was approved and applauded by the *Court*, and they were encouraged to take such *Liberties* with their *Representatives*, as appear surprizing to us, who live in *later* and *calmer Times*. In the *Reign* of Queen ANNE, the People had such a Veneration for the *Church*, that they were thought deficient in their *Regard* to the *Ministry*, the *Queen*, and the *Parliament* itself, but in time they fully justified themselves to *her Majesty*, by resenting that *State of Dependance*, in which she was held by *some great Men*, and carrying their Point at *last*, what had been *Faction* for so many Years together, was taken for *Sterling Loyalty*, which was capable of bearing every *Test*. In the *four last Years* of the *Queen*, a great Part of the Nation grew out of Humour with the *Measures* she pursued, and re-
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flected severely on the *Parliament* which supported them. This Conduct of theirs, was fully justified by a *Parliamentary Enquiry* in the *last* Reign, the *Severity* of which in a great Measure recovered the *Credit* of that *August Assembly*, and taught the People to honour as became them, the *great Council* of the *Nation*, the natural *Trustees* of our *Properties*, and the *legal Guardians* of our *Liberty*.

By Degrees, however, this *Awe* wore off again, and in process of Time, there grew up a *strong Spirit* of *Jealousy* and *Discontent*, especially after the *South-Sea Scheme* took Place, and on it's Detection, the *Criminals* were *countenanced* by those to whom it belonged of right to have punished the *Misdemeanours* they had committed. Thence forward, the Common People grew afraid of *those* who ought to have been their *surest Refuge*, and began to surmise, that the *Senate* took *too large* a Share of *Power* to themselves, and left *too little* to *those* from whom they *deriv'd* it. Stung with these Apprehensions, and Daily provok'd with what they took, for Instances of that *Disposition*, which gave *Distate*, they lost all *Temper*, and fell exactly into those *Notions*, which we have shewn to be most *Dangerous* to a *free Government*.

In this Situation, Things were, when the Authors of the *present Opposition*, proposed their *Plan*, for restoring the *Spirit* of the *Constitution*, and Eradicating these *Fears*, from the *Breasts* of the *People*, whom they were willing to have gratified in *two Points*, *Viz.* The *Shortning* the *Duration* of *Parliaments*, and the excluding *such Persons*, from *Seats* there, as might be Suspected of having *particular Interests*, incompatible with *Public Trust*. This
Project

Project of theirs was so plausible, that we need not wonder a very *great* Part of the *Nation* gave into it, especially when we consider, that the *wisest* *Persons* in the *Kingdom*, even *those* who in this critical Juncture have been *advanced* to the *Helm*, approv'd these *Proposals*, and contended warmly for their being *carried* into *Execution*. It must be owned, that notwithstanding many *Years* *Struggle*, and an *Opposition* carried on with *equal* *Spirit* and *Industry*, they were still *baffled*, by *Dint* of *Voices* however, and not of *Argument*; for these *great* *Patriots* most judiciously insisted, that their not being able to *carry* these *Points*, was the fullest *Proof* of their *Rectitude*, since they were defeated by *Men* who had visibly an *Interest* in keeping *Parliaments* *long* on *Foot*, and thought themselves bound to *defend* the *Innocency* of *Places*, because they *enjoyed* them. Now upon this Subject it is difficult to pronounce, for beyond Question the People are as to it still *dissatisfied*, and with Respect to the *Seasonableness* of the *Remedy*, we can say nothing against it which will not justify those whom the *Voice* of the *Nation* condemn'd *last* *Year*, and at the same Time *reflect* on the *Judgment* of our *present* *great* *Men*, who so strenuously maintain'd the *Expediency*, and so often divided in favour of a *Law* to *repeal* the *Septennial* *Act*, and for a *comprehensive* *Place-Bill*.

We must indeed allow, that they have *chang'd* their Sentiments since, and that as they are *older*, they ought consequently to be *wiser*. But then here lies the Misfortune, they have now an *Interest* in *long* *Parliaments*, which they had not *before*, and they have *swallow'd* those *Places* for

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which they declared they had no *Appetite*. Upon this sudden *Turn* in their Conduct, *two* very hard Questions have been *moved*, the *first* is, whether this Departure from their *Principles*, does not deprive their *present Reasonings* of all *Authority*; for how can we take their *Words* now, for what the other Day they *denied*? The other is, whether their *own Example* is not the clearest Demonstration that can be demanded of the *Validity* of their *former Arguments*; for must not such Things be *excessively dangerous* to a free *People*, as have produced such *strange Effects* upon their *Friends*. These Gentlemen were very lately owned the *wisest* and *ablest* Persons in the *Kingdom*, and when they were so acknowledg'd, they told us, that *Placemen* were *dangerous* in *Parliament*, because their *Places* influenced their *Conduct*, do not their *Actions* teach us so still? Would any *sober Man* be persuaded out of his *Love* of *Temperance*, by hearing a *Philosopher* declaim in Favour of *Drunkenness*, if he saw that *contrary to Custom* the *Sage* had got a *Cup in his Head*?

To speak farther to this *Point* with Candour and Decency. We must acknowledge, that *unbounded Licence* reigns amongst us, that the *common People* have lost *Respect* for *Dignity*, and that the *middle Sort* are full of *Jealousies* and *Suspitions*. The *Court Writers* are continually complaining of the *former*, and their *own Instructions* sufficiently testify the *Sense* of the *latter*. The *Fact* then is out of *Dispute*, we are certainly *sick* of this dangerous *Disease*; the next Thing to be enquired is, whether we ought to follow the *Advice* of *those* who propose to us a Method of eradicating the *Cause* of the

the *Distemper*, or whether we shall let it *take its Course*, because our *Quondam Doctors* are become *above* their *Business*. If they have chang'd their *Language*, they must be very *popular* indeed to introduce their *new Dialect* in so short a Time too throughout the *Nation*, and to talk of *forcing* the *People* to alter their *Tone* would be likewise a little *hard*, since they are but *Parrots* of their own *teaching*. What may be now stiled *the Clamour* of the *Mob*, was t'other Day the *Voice* of the *Nation*, and so avow'd to be by the *Folks* of whom I am speaking, and as to the *Business* of *instructing*, the *Form*, is all that belongs to the *Places* from whence they come, they take their *Matter* from your *own Report*. This is the plain, the *naked Truth*, I have kept strictly to my Promise, I have not either *coined a Fact*, or *heighten'd* any *Matter of Fact* by my manner of *relating* it.

The *Merit* then of the *Opposition* in this *Respect* lies here. They have propos'd to secure the *Freedom* of *Parliament*, by restraining the unwarrantable Practices of *returning Officers*, of which we have had such flagrant as well as such recent *Examples*, and which left even the *Mob* without a Doubt, that one of the most *solemn Acts* in our *Government*, might through the *Iniquity* of a very *insignificant Instrument* be turned into a *down-right Farce*. Having thus secured the *Door*, they next propos'd *sweeping* the *House*, and this by a full and comprehensive *Place-Bill*. The Reason of the Thing has been over and over *determined* by the *Legislature*, the single Point now in Question is, whether these *Acts* shall be *living Laws*, or *dead Letters*, whether they shall be Things for *Shew*,

or for *Use*? When this Provision was made, the *Opposition* were for going one Step farther, and having provided against the known Methods of affecting the *Freedom of Parliaments*, they were desirous of assigning a Remedy too for the Mischiefs that might be introduced by the intriguing *Heads* of bad *Ministers* in succeeding Times, and with this View they insisted on the *Repeal* of the *Septennial Act*. Will any Man say, that this Scheme is at all *inconsistent*, or that it is calculated to serve *private Purposes*; or is there any Reason, that they should give it up, when the *great Men* who were very lately in the *same Sentiments*, have not thought fit to prescribe *any other Method* for the *Cure* of that *Disease*, which they still acknowledge, and which they seem to be apprehensive, may *some Time* or *other* become *fatal* to *themselves*, as well as to the *State*.

As to the *second Point*, the *Libertinism* of our *Morals* is to the full as notorious as the *Licentiousness* of our *Speech*. We are become as remarkable for *Corruption*, as we were formerly for our *public Spirit*. This is confessed by *ourselves*, and published through all the *World*, and therefore one would think, that every Man who is *free* from this *Taint*, should be desirous of seeing such a *national Reflection* wiped off. I will not say that the Source of this great Mischief has been the Conduct of *People in Power*; but most certain it is, that if *Corruption* once reigns in *high Life*, the *Reformation* must begin *there*. It is a vain Thing to expect that the *Vulgar* should be *honest*, when *Honesty* is laughed at by their *Betters*, and it is ridiculous to suppose, that the *Laws* should answer their

their *Ends* in *common Affairs*, when it is evident, that they have *lost* their *Power* in those of a superior Nature. To speak the *Truth*, which can never be a *Crime* amongst *free People*, every Nation is guided by the *Examples* of such as are most distinguished therein by *Birth*, by *Fortune*, or by *Office*, and if there be *no Religion*, no respect to *Principle*, no regard to *public Good* visible amongst *them*, we cannot expect to find it among such as in the *Nature* of *Things*, must be their *Dependants*.

We may easily illustrate this, by a *too well known* Example. When a Man of Rank takes it into his Head to alter the *Nature* of our *Constitution*, by making himself Master of a *Country Corporation*, and turning a Town vested with a Right of sending *Members* to *Parliament* into his *Borough*, the Methods that he takes, will go near to ruin the *Morals*, as well as to subvert the *Freedom* of such a Place. In the first Place, the *Notions* of the *Inhabitants* must be vitiated, they must be taught to prefer their *own Interest*, to that of the *Public*, and when they have done this, what shall hinder them from preferring their *own Interest* to every other *Man's*? By this Step, the very Basis of fair *Dealing*, is undermined, and a Man loses his *Principles* for ever. Next, he must be brought to believe that *Attachment* to the *great Man's Interest*, is a *Point of Honour*, and thus he is in the Situation of a *Highwayman*, who substitutes fair *Dealing* to the *Gang*, instead of *Obedience* to the *Laws*, and fancies himself after repeated Acts of Villainy, a *Man of Honour* forsooth, because he is not *faithless* to his *Fellows*. Lastly, every such Person is bound to *bate* and *deride*, to *counteract* and *misrepresent*

present all who are not in his *great Man's Interest*. By proceeding in this Road, he loses the Dignity of a *free-born Briton*, and becomes as much a *Vassal* as his *Forefathers*, who by the Name of *Villains*, were sold together with the *Estate*, and a *Lord* transferred them with as little Ceremony, as the *Trees* that grew upon it. Such is the Progress of Knavery, Deceit, and Corruption; by such swift Strides, it passes from *one End* of a *Country* to *another*, and the *bad Examples* of a *few*, become sufficient to *mislead* sometimes the *greater Part* of a *Nation*.

Every *Mayor*, *Bailiff*, or other *Head Officer*, of a little *Borough*, acts entirely on the same Principles with a *Prime Minister*. If he is a *Man of Integrity*, and *wishes well* to his *Country*, and has withal a *clear Head*, and *good natural Parts*, he will procure many *Advantages* to the *Place* where he *presides*; if on the other Hand, he be a *weak Man*, he will do *less good* indeed; but then he will do *no hurt*. But if such a *Person* be a *venal* and *corrupt Man*, he will be able to disseminate his *Vices* through the whole *Extent* of his *Jurisdiction*, he will quickly either find or make *fit Instruments* for his *sinister Purposes*, and when he has once brought Men to think as he does, it will require an *Age* to purge out that *Villainy* which he will introduce in a *Year*. When once Men come to treat the *public Interest* lightly, they soon run into the *grossest Dishonesty*; for the whole *System* of *Morality* is built on a *political Basis*, and when we lose all Reverence for *the whole*, respect for *Individuals* can never hold us long. It may be true, that some *great Men* have behaved *well* in *private Life*, though wickedly
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in their *public Characters*; but then on a strict Review, this will be found either the *Effect* of a *natural Disposition*, for which no Man deserves *Praise*, or of a *refined Policy*, that the amiableness of his private *Character*, may screen him from *public Justice*. But in the common Course of Things, the *Case* is quite *otherwise*, and a *bad Man* in *Office*, is a *bad Man* in *every other Respect*.

But when these *Machiavilean* Motions have prevailed for some time, they spread themselves *so far*, and meet with so many *Defenders*, that *Honesty* is put quite *out of Countenance*, and a Man who pretends to *feel* any Thing like a *Sense of Virtue* or *public Spirit*, is treated as a *Hypocrite*, or an *Enthusiast*. It is when Things are come to this pass, that a Country is in the *utmost Danger*; that the *Inhabitants* stand on the very brink of *Ruin*, and can be saved only by *frighting* them so much, as to make them start back. I will not say, that this is *our Case*, and yet a *certain Report* has said it, and that *Report* we know was framed by the *Friends* of those *great Folks*, who are now ready to frown if you mention *Corruption*. Yet, alas! if that *Report* be true, as we all know it is but *too true*, there never was such a *Sink of Corruption* as this Island, and to think that displaying this *Filth*, is equivalent to cleansing it, or that changing one *Set of Names* for *another*, is sufficient to *atone* for such a *Series of Offences* against the *Public*, is to believe what Mr. *Voltaire* says is true, *viz.* That we are no more like our *Forefathers*, than the *modern Italians* are like the *old Romans*, of which, if I were once convinced, I should not only think *Writing*, but *Living*, to little Purpose.

Having

Having shewn that *the Great*, and *the Opposition* are thus far agreed, that *Corruption* hath made a *fatal Progress* amongst us, we are next to consider, what *both Parties* have proposed, in order to remove so *black a Stain*, and to cure so dangerous an *Evil*. The *Opposition* have been for *examining* this Matter to the *bottom*, for laying all these *Practices* open, and for *punishing* such as have been *concerned* in them. This would certainly be an efficacious *Remedy*, it would convince the Nation of *two Things* ; *first*, that *injuring the Public*, contriving the *Ruin of our Government*, and *debasing the Minds of the People*, are really *Crimes*, and not *Arcana Imperii*, the lawful *Practices of Ministers*, and such as their *Trade* requires, which some have not scrupled to *give out*. *Secondly*, it would shew all the *World*, that we are still *sound at Heart*, that we have yet *Probity* enough to *start at such Iniquities*, and that we do not want *Courage or Power* to punish them. These *Reflections* I must own, I have borrowed from the *Report* itself, and as it is the only *Quotation* I shall make, I beg Leave to give it the *Reader* as it *stands there*, that he may be convinced of the *eminent Peril* we are in, and learn from thence to discover whether there be yet a Possibility of our *escaping or not*. Thus *speaks the Report*.

“ This *Method of Corruption* is as *sure*, and
 “ therefore your Committee apprehends as *criminal* a Way of *subverting the Constitution*, as
 “ by an *armed Force* ; it is a *Crime* productive of
 “ a *total Destruction* of the very *Being* of this *Government*, and is so *high and unnatural*, that no-
 “ thing but the *Powers of Parliament* can reach it,
 “ and

the *Opposition* had again drawn themselves into pretty good *Order*, and this Accident brought back their *Heads*, or at least determin'd them to *decline* going entirely off so *soon* as they had first *intended*; but at the same *Time*, that this gave the *Opposition* some *Advantage*, by preserving its *Strength*, it likewise did it not a *little Prejudice* by *diverting* its *Measures*. In short, the *Dispute* became *Personal* again, and instead of inquiring by what *wrong Steps* the *Nation* had been *injured*, it was resolv'd to *enquire* what *wrong Steps* could be fix'd upon a *certain Person*. It would be no difficult Thing to shew that *he* suffer'd *much less* by this, than the *Opposition* itself. There was a great deal of *Time* wasted to very little *Purpose*, and in this *Time* that generous *Spirit* which had hitherto actuated the *Opposition* vanished by *Degrees*. Not to dwell too long on so *disagreeable* a *Subject*, the Issue of what at first was esteem'd a *national Affair*, became entirely *personal*, and that which had for a *Time* been consider'd as the most *solemn Scene* that had ever appear'd on a *political Theatre*, dwindled at length into a *downright Farce*. *Great Men* may be angry when they see themselves made the *Sport*, even of *little People*, but this will always be the Case while the *People* remain *free*, and their *great Men* descend to do *little Things*.

After running thro' as succinctly as we might the *History* of the *Opposition*, and setting the principal Events which have distinguish'd it from *other Oppositions* in their proper *Lights*, we come now to what is more material, and of far greater Consequence to the *Public*, viz. the Examination of the *Ends* of this *Opposition*, or to borrow for once the Lawyer's Phrase, we are now to look

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into

into the *Merits* of the *Cause*, and with that Earnestness which becomes *honest Men*, and that Fund of good Sense which has ever been allow'd us as *Britons*, to enquire whether the *Principles* of this *Opposition* conduce to *disturb* and *distress* this Nation; or whether properly pursued, they have not the strongest Tendency to *free* us from all our *Misfortunes*, and to silence the *Noise*, by taking away the *Causes* of *Tax Complaints*. This is to be the Business of the succeeding Pages, and this I shall treat as clearly and plainly as the Subject will bear, without straining *Facts*, or using a *declamatory Style*, which very little become an Advocate for TRUTH, whose *Charms* like those of a perfect Beauty, cannot be heightened, but may be easily *abated* by the Interposition of *Art*.

In the first Place then, we must learn to satisfy ourselves, whether the Nation really *suffers* under any *Difficulties*, or whether (as a very artful Writer would persuade us) we are only troubled with *political Spleen*. Now a Nation *suffers*, or at least may *suffer* several Ways; but particularly by these *three*, when *respect* to its Government *declines*, when it's *best Laws* are *worse executed*, and when *greater Sums* are levied for the *public Service*, than the *Fortunes* of *private People* can bear. By *any*, much more *all* of these Nation may be *enervated*, and brought to the *Brink* of *Ruin*, as the History of every one great *Monarchy* or flourishing *State* that is now decayed will sufficiently *prove*.

As to the *first* of these *political Maladies*, the Symptoms which usually attend it are *universal Uneasiness*, a general *Distaste* of *Power*, and a want of all *Reverence* towards every *Rank* of *Magistrates*. The ancient History of the *Hebrews* affords

us a short and excellent Definition of this Mischief; for whenever it reign'd amongst that People the Phrase used to express it is, *there was no King in Israel*, that is, *no Ruler* whose *Authority* was regarded, or whose *Decrees* were held sacred. In the ancient *Greek* Republics, there were *Magistrates* assign'd by the *Constitution* to watch over it, with a View to prevent this dangerous *Disease* of *State*. In *Athens* they were stild *Archons*, in *Sparta*, *Ephori*, and so long as these did *their Duty*, the People never failed in *theirs*. But when these forgot their *Characters*, and endeavour'd to apply the *Power* vested in them to *private Purposes*, instead of the *public Service*, they soon lost their *Credit*, and the *State* its *Being*. The like happen'd to the *Romans*, when the *Tribunes* affected to be their *Princes*, instead of their *Protectors*, and brought the *Weight* of the *People* to bear intollerably hard upon that *Frame* of *Government*, which it had been their *Interest* to support. When the *Names* and *Shadows* of *useful Offices* only remain, and the *Ends* for which they were instituted are neglected, *Authority* is lost of Course, nor is there any Method of proving that *Government* was instituted for the Sake of the *governed*, more plain than this, that whenever it ceases to promote this *End*, it becomes the Object either of *Hatred* or *Contempt*. Of *Hatred*, if supported by an *armed Force*, of *Contempt*, if it be destitute of that *Guard*. This is a fair and candid Account of the *Matter*, drawn from *Reason* and *Experience*, by which Men arrive at *Certainty*, and not an artful *Deduction* of a precarious *Proposition* by the *Help* of *Rhetorical Flourishes*.

As to the *second* Distemper I have mention'd, it commonly discovers itself by a *boundless Propensity to Pleasure*, a prodigious *Relaxation of Principles*, and an *Epidemic Corruption of Manners*. The old Book I cited before has a wondrous pathetic Phrase for this Grievance, for as often as the People were in this Condition, they are said to *have done every Man what was right in his own Eyes*. How accurate, how expressive this Description ! To follow the Dictates of *private Interest*, to pursue the *Projects* plann'd by our *Passions*, to run wildly into the *Gratification* of every sensual *Appetite*, or every idle *Whim* of a distemper'd *Imagination*, merely to indulge *ourselves* without Respect to *Society*, is that *kind of Disorder* which I meant to trace. When the *Bulk* of any *Nation* comes to be agitated by such a *Spirit*, it must necessarily follow, that however excellent their *Laws*, they must stand repealed in *Fact*, though they retain their *Places* still in their *Statute Books*. It was so at *Athens*, when she boasted herself the *politest* and the *freest State* in *Greece*. The City was adorn'd with the noblest *Buildings*, her Citizens were rever'd *abroad*, and appeared with the greatest *Eclat* at home; her Commerce was most *extensive*, her Fame at its *highest Pitch* when *Alcibiades* then a Boy, gave *Pericles* this wise Advice, that *since it puzzled him to make up the public Accompts, he had best study how he might avoid making them up at all*. The *Corruption* of the *Times* made it easy for him to carry this Scheme into Execution, and he *escaped* by plunging his *Country* into the *Peloponnesian War*, by which she was *undone for ever*. At *Rome* the Case was the same, when the *great Men* began to value themselves on a *fine Taste*, and an
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immense Expence; instead of that *unblemish'd Probity* and *illustrious Poverty* by which their *Ancestors* were distinguished, Things quickly took a *new Turn*, and that glorious *Common-wealth* which had been the *Mistress of Nations*, and the *Sovereign of the World*, sunk into *Slavery*, the meanest and basest *Slavery*, becoming a *Prey* to the most *unworthy* of her *Subjects*.

As to the *last* of the *Cases* hinted at before, it's Marks are the most *evident* of all. A People affected thereby, feel the *Pangs* of *Poverty*, without discerning its true *Cause*; because those who ought to *enquire* into, and *redress* their *Grievances*, employ all their Skill and Pains either to *stifle* or *Disguise* them. Such a Nation, sensible of *declining Trade*, ascribe it now to *one* Thing, then to *another*, and by injudicious Attempts to *rid* them of supposed *Burdens*, render themselves still more incapable of bearing *that Load* which they want the *Judgment* to shake off. Instead of *virtuous Industry*, there prevails amongst them a *fraudulent Dexterity* in coining artificial *Riches*, which serve to *conceal* their true Condition from *themselves*, and to defend for a while the most *cunning* amongst them, from the *Miseries* felt by the *most Worthy*. We have no Examples of this kind in *antient History*, but the Instances which occur in the *Memoirs* of later *Ages*, are too numerous to be so much as mention'd. The great Kingdom of *Spain*, has long groaned under this kind of *Oppression*. The *two* famous States of *Venice* and *Genoa*, have suffer'd their *Glories* to *fade*, and their Strength to be exhausted, by not attending in Time to this *Canker*, and I could name another *Republic*, which is at
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last become sensible of this *Evil*, though somewhat of the *latest*. Before I dismiss this Subject, I must observe, that this Sort of *Consumption* is unknown to *arbitrary Governments*. Under them, *Oppression* is a *Feaver*, the *Acuteness* of which quickly obliges their *Rulers* to have Recourse to *proper Remedies*, how little *Pity* soever they may have in their *own Natures*. There must be some *kind of Liberty* to nourish this *lingering Disease*, and to feed the *Patient* with *Hopes* till the *Distemper* preys upon the *Vitals*.

If therefore the *Symptoms*, inseperable from these *Maladies*, are undeniably to be met with *amongst us*, we may very safely conclude, that our Condition is very *dangerous*, and that nothing can prevent it from becoming *desperate*, but timely Attention, and a speedy and vigorous Application of *proper Remedies*. For, as it is certainly false Practice, when *State Physicians* feed the Humour of their Patients, and encourage them in taking unnecessary *Medicines*, by favouring *vulgar Mistakes*, and nursing *imaginary Diseases*; so on the other Hand, it is as inexcusable to *possess* them with *false* Notions of their own *Strength*, and by furnishing them with *artificial Spirits* to keep them in perpetual *Exercise*, too violent perhaps for them even when in *full Health*, till their *Constitutions* are quite exhausted, and *Death* and *Despair* surprize them at once. When a *Nation* is in such Circumstances, those who *flatter* them *least*, are undoubtedly their *best Friends*, and such as are for going to the *Bottom* of Things, *better Physicians* than those, who for the Sake of their *own Profit*, and perhaps

a pretty large Share of *present Applause*, would content themselves with a *palliative Cure*.

In applying what has been already said to the *State* of our *own Nation*, I shall make Use of all that *Tenderness* and *Precaution* which so *nice* a *Subject* requires. -- In the *first Place*, then it is certain, that from the *Revolution* to *this Time*, the People have upon very many *Occasions*, betrayed a great *Disrespect* towards their *Governors*, and this not only against *particular Administrations*, but against the *Legislature* itself. The *Pretence* has always been the *ill Conduct* of their *Governors*, and that *this* in *all Cases* has not been a *mere Pretence*, will sufficiently appear if we consider that in some Part of *King William's Reign*, their *Dissatisfaction* to the *Ministry* was countenanced by the *House of Commons*, as in the *latter Part* of that *Reign*, their *Dislike* to the *House of Commons* was approved and applauded by the *Court*, and they were encouraged to take such *Liberties* with their *Representatives*, as appear surprizing to us, who live in *later* and *calmer Times*. In the *Reign* of *Queen ANNE*, the People had such a *Veneration* for the *Church*, that they were thought deficient in their *Regard* to the *Ministry*, the *Queen*, and the *Parliament* itself, but in time they fully justified themselves to *her Majesty*, by resenting that *State* of *Dependance*, in which she was held by *some great Men*, and carrying their Point at *last*, what had been *Faction* for so many Years together, was taken for *Sterling Loyalty*, which was capable of bearing every *Test*. In the *four last Years* of the *Queen*, a great Part of the Nation grew out of *Humour* with the *Measures* she pursued, and reflected

flected severely on the *Parliament* which supported them. This Conduct of theirs, was fully justified by a *Parliamentary Enquiry* in the last Reign, the Severity of which in a great Measure recovered the Credit of that *August Assembly*, and taught the People to honour as became them, the great Council of the Nation, the natural Trustees of our Properties, and the legal Guardians of our Liberty.

By Degrees, however, this *Awe* wore off again, and in process of Time, there grew up a strong Spirit of Jealousy and Discontent, especially after the *South-Sea Scheme* took Place, and on it's Detection, the Criminals were countenanced by those to whom it belonged of right to have punished the *Misdemeanours* they had committed. Thence forward, the Common People grew afraid of those who ought to have been their surest Refuge, and began to surmise, that the Senate took too large a Share of Power to themselves, and left too little to those from whom they deriv'd it. Stung with these Apprehensions, and Daily provok'd with what they took, for Instances of that Disposition, which gave Distate, they lost all Temper, and fell exactly into those Notions, which we have shewn to be most Dangerous to a free Government.

In this Situation, Things were, when the Authors of the present Opposition, proposed their Plan, for restoring the Spirit of the Constitution, and Eradicating these Fears, from the Breasts of the People, whom they were willing to have gratified in two Points, Viz. The Shortning the Duration of Parliaments, and the excluding such Persons, from Seats there, as might be Suspected of having particular Interests, incompatible with Public Trust. This
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dustrious Part of the *Nation*, if they think fit to *stay in it*, will work as hard as they can work, — not for *themselves* — but for the *Idle*. And yet these *idle People* will, *ten to one*, continue to *believe* that they are the best Sort of Folks in the *Nation*.

That we may draw to a Conclusion in some Time, and not dwell too long on such disagreeable Subjects, I will mention but *one Argument* more, and that shall be the *several Methods* taken to supply the *Deficiency* of *real Wealth*, by *Tallies*, *Bonds*, *Notes*, and many other Contrivances. These are understood to be great *Helps* to *Trade*, and so I confess they might be, if they were *circulated* only among *Traders*, for then we might be pretty certain, that the *real Value* of these *circulating Certificates* existed *somewhere*, which we know is *not* the Case at present, for if it were, the *Approach* of *War*, or the *Rumour* of an *Invasion*, could not so *easily*, or so *deeply* affect them, as we know it *has done* and *would do*. On this Account, we may lay it down as a Thing certain, that as *Lotteries* give a *Check* to *Trade*, so the circulating of this kind of *Paper Treasure* serves to *conceal* our Circumstances, and to prevent our *Feeling* the gradual *Decay* of our *Wealth*, as well as to serve the *Purposes* of *sly Politicians*, and to administer to all the *Ends* of *Luxury*. In short, there is not that Difference between *private* and *public* Affairs which some *crafty Writers* would make us believe; they are generally speaking, govern'd by the *same Maxims*, and ought therefore to be judg'd by the *same Rules*: Frugality, Industry, and a virtuous Behaviour, is as *necessary* to make the State *flourish*, as to *better* the *Circum-*
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stances of it's meanest Subject and Profusion ; Idleness, and a total Corruption of Manners, will as certainly beggar a Kingdom, as it would bankrupt any Man in it.

There may be, in all probability, a Set of *carping Critics*, who will take *Exception* at this Manner of *stating Facts*, and pretend, that to *catch the Vulgar*, I write down to their *Taste*, and by giving a *new Turn* to *political Subjects*, endeavour to render such Things *ridiculous*, as ought to be the Objects of *Reverence*, and to make those People *Judges*, who in the Nature of Things, can never be brought to apprehend the *Matters* of which I would have them judge. But to this I answer, that *familiar Comparisons* best explain *all Subjects*, and when used with Decency and Discretion, contribute more towards the spreading *true Science*, than all the *methodical Systems* that ever were published. I say farther, that I use them, because I seek to be *understood*, and these solemn Gentlemen *disclaim* them for the *contrary Reason*, because they would keep their *real Sentiments* in the *Dark*, and delude the People with *Speeches* that seem to have a *contrary meaning*. They would persuade them, that *Taxes* only *serve* to *circulate Money*, that the *Funds* are so many salutary *Contrivances* for the *Maintainance* of *Widows* and *Orphans*, without exposing them to the *Plague of doing something to get their Bread*, as was the *barbarous Custom of former Ages* ; that *Lotteries* are thought of, purely to *surprize* good *Subjects*, with *great Estates*. without giving them the *Trouble of getting them* ; that *public Companies* are for the *Benefit of Trade*, or at least of *Traders*, because so many *Citizens* are provided for as *Directors*, and that

that the *Liberty* such *odd Fellows* as I, are allowed of talking against these *public Benefits*, is preferable to the *Freedom* our *Fore-fathers* enjoyed, when *Taxes*, *Debts* and *Lotteries* were Things *unheard of*, when a *Merchant* of *London* contested *Customs* with the *Crown*, and the Word *Excise*, if pronounced in *Parliament*, would have drawn a *Reprimand*, at least if not a *Commitment*.

Another civilier Sort of *Criticks*, will furnish out a new Set of *Objections*, such as the *Inexpediency* of making these Things *known* to the *Vulgar*, the Danger of laying open to them the *Secrets* of *Government*, and the Folly of putting it into the Power of that *hot-mouth'd Beast* the *Multitude*, to take the *Bit* in its *Mouth*, and run away with its *Rider*. But these *soft spoken Gentlemen* ought to consider that *Exceptions* of this Sort are a little out of *Date*, for as *Government* *concerns* every Man, so it seems but natural that every Man should *concern* himself about *Government*, and as the *lowest Fellow* in the Kingdom contributes out of what he gets to the *public Service*, so it seems but *just* that he should, if he has a *Mind*, know *what he pays for*, and *see*, if he *can see*, whether the *Public* is *well served* or *not*. If the meaner Sort of People were *spared* in *public Impositions*, and only Men of a *certain Estate* paid towards the *Expences* of *Government*, there would be some *Colour* of *Justice* in talking of *Rabble* and *Mob*, and exclaiming against the *Insolence* of the *Dregs* of the *People*. But while it is as it is, that every Man from the *Crown* of his *Hat* that covers his *Head*, to the *Sole* of the *Shoe* that he treads *under Foot*, wears nothing, out of which he does not *pay* towards the

Support of the State, and therefore cannot escape paying, unless he goes naked, and while it is impossible for a Man to live, though it were upon brown Bread and Small-Beer, without contributing to the Maintenance of those who rule him. I should be glad to know how consistently with Justice and Equity any Creature that breaths the British Air, should be deprived of his Right of enquiring and judging whether we are well or ill governed, while we call ourselves a free People.

The *Mischiefs* that are supposed to flow from these *Doctrines*, are meer *Bugbears* and *Chimera's*, a Sort of *Rawheads* and *Bloodybones*, invented by *political Nurses* to fright their *Children* from *squalling*, when they are *too lazy* or *too proud* to undress and pull out the *Pins* that *prick* them. While a People may *enquire*, they will never *rebel*; but the surest Way to make them *act*, is to forbid them to *talk*, as if you attempt to *tye* a Man's *Hands*, or to *gagg* him, he naturally supposes that you intend to *cut* his *Throat*, or at least to make *free* with his *Pockets*. In such a Country as this, the People need not recur to *Insurrections*, those are *fit Remedies* only under *arbitrary Governments*. We are *free* by our *Laws*, and therefore must have a *legal Remedy* for every *Evil*. The single Enquiry then is under what *Evils* we *suffer*, what *Remedies* are most like to give us *Relief*, and *by whom* those *Remedies* have been *proposed*, since questionless *they* are our *Physicians*. On this Subject, therefore, I shall offer a few *free Thoughts* as they rise in my Mind, and so leave my *Readers* to their own *Reflections*;

It must be acknowledged on all Hands, that the *Opposition* have constantly and uniformly exclaimed against the Waste of *public Treasure*, the Squandering *People's Money*, increasing the Number of their *Taxes*, and declining all Thoughts of decreasing their *Debts*. It must be likewise own'd, that they have upon every Occasion opposed such Measures as have had a Tendency to these *Mischiefs*; they have been against *indefinite Grants*, *Votes of Credit*, Sums given *without Account*, raising *unnecessary Troops*, or raising *necessary Troops*, in *too expensive* a Way, against *Negotiations* without End, and *Armaments* that hurt none, but *ourselves*. They have earnestly pressed for *reirencbing* our *annual Expences*, for a *Commission* to review the *management* of the *Revenue* for several Years *past*, and another to *settle* and *state* the *Debts* of the *Nation*. They have more than once proposed, that *some Method* should be taken to *stop these* at least, till a way could be found to *pay* them, and they have always protested against applying any other Way the *sinking Fund*, the only Method that ever was thought of for *paying it*. They have for twenty Years together expostulated with the *Friends* of the *Ministry*, whenever they have attempted to create *new Taxes*, or to continue *old ones* for *new Terms*; they have bewailed the Misfortune of the People to be continually feeling *fresh Weight*, without receiving any Addition either of Strength or Spirits. In a Word, they have manifested their Concert, and avowed their Dislike of what they conceived would be fatal to their *Country*, and this they have done at the Expence of their *Characters* and *Fortunes*. In the former, they have suffered by the Imputation

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on of being *disaffected*; the latter has been impaired not only by their constant serving the Nation at their own *Expence*, but by their being obliged to *spend* their *own Money* against that of the *Nation*, in order to have the *Honour* to serve it at their *own Expence*, and to be able to propose their Doubts, to lay open their Jealousies, and to expose to the People's Representatives whatever they took to be *Grievances* on the *People*.

As to any *Propositions*, made by the *Great*, either for lessning our Charge, for lowering our Impositions, or for putting our Debts into a Train of Payment, I must say it frankly, I know of *none*. They frequently speak indeed in very pathetic Terms of supporting the Honour and Dignity of the Crown, of furnishing *Supplies* for the *public Service*, and of making good the *Deficiencies* of former *Grants*. They commonly display their *Eloquence*, in support of *Laws* for securing and increasing the *Revenue*, for appointing and ascertaining *new Funds*, and as in the Case of the *Gin-Act*, for preventing the Crown's *Loss* by the People's *Gain*, though in the Event, the Terms were reversed, for the People *got nothing*, and the Crown *all*. No doubt if these worthy Persons would apply themselves as assiduously to the *Points* which the Patriots pretend to make their *Care*, they might succeed as happily in them, as they do in their *Expedients* for raising those *vast Sums*, which they find *annually* requisite for the Service of a Nation, which it is to be feared, may sometime or other be unable to reward such able Servants, at least as amply as she has hitherto done. Dr. *Davenant* foresaw this above *forty Years* ago, and told

us very *prophetically* in a Book he published about that Time, that as we could never hope to thrive or grow rich as a *Nation*, while the *Expences* of our *Government* exceeded *two Millions three Hundred Pounds* per Annum, so if we went on in the Train we were then, of giving a *Loose* to our *Expences*, and contracting *Debts* without *Bowels* for *Posterity*, we might at length come to raise *six or seven Millions* a Year as long as it would last. As we have fulfilled the *latter Part* of this *Prediction*, so methinks it is high Time we took the *first* into our *Consideration*, for without Question, the *Time* is not far off, when even the most consummate *Politicians* will find it surpass their Skill to draw *Water* out of an *empty Well*.

We have now run through the *Rise, Progress* and several *Fates* of the *Opposition* ; we have seen it feeble in its *Beginning*, and despised for its *Feebleness* ; we have seen it continually growing, notwithstanding all the Pains taken to depress it. We have known it thrive upon *Defeats*, and we now see it in a worse Condition for its *Victory*. From this Prospect of the *Events* which have attended it, we have learned to distinguish between the *Pretences* of some who are, or have been engaged in it, and the *Principles* of the *Opposition* itself. The former we have discovered to be sometimes *iniquitous*, and always *irregular*, the latter perfectly *just*, and everlastingly the same. This has explained to us the Folly of conceiving amiss of *Opposition* through the *Conduct* of such as have been at the *Head* of it, and this has taught, or ought to teach us, that an *Opposition* never suffers by the

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Loss of such *Heads*. A *Faction* cannot be without *Leaders*, because the Design of a *Faction*, is to bring those who compose it, into *Power*, and there is no managing a *War* without a *Commander* in *Chief*, and subordinate *Officers*. But an *Opposition* it quite another *Thing*, it aims at a *Change* of *Measures*, and not of *Men*, and therefore is never in a greater Probability of *succeeding*, than when such as compose it, are bound to each other by no other *Tie* than that of *sameness* of *Sentiment*, and propound nothing more to *themselves* than obliging *others* to act *right*.

We have still done more than all this, we have examined the *Grounds* and *Reasons* of the *Opposition*. We have considered the Nature of those *Things* of which they *complain*, independent of their Relation to ourselves, and we have seen that they are real and not imaginary Evils ; that they are productive of ruinous *Consequences*, and that as all this is discoverable by *Common Sense*, so it has been justified likewise by *constant Experience*. We have then enquired into the *Evidence* in Proof of these *Mischiefs* actually subsisting *amongst us*, and after these necessary *Steps*, we have taken a View of the *Remedies* proposed, and of the *Arguments* offered to shew that they would *radically* cure these *Mischiefs*. Thus we have gone through the whole of what we *proposed*, and if we have committed any Error in the *Course* of our *Reasonings*, upon so many and so intricate *Subjects*, the whole lies still before *us*, and we may easily trace that Error back to its Source, and consequently have it in our Power to *rectify* our *Notions*. All this we have done with-

out *Heat* or *Passion*, without *Prejudice* or *personal Resentment*, we have pursued *Truth* and not *Opinion*, we have prosecuted *national Advantages*, and not sought to recommend the *Designs* of *any Party*; we have united the *free-thinking* of the *Whigs*, with the *Public Spirit* of the *Tories*, and we have shewn that a *rational Opposition* comprehends all that is *good*, and rejects all that is *evil* in every *Party*.

Upon the whole, we have made it manifest that *the Opposition*, strictly speaking, hath nothing in it of *Disaffection* or *Disloyalty*, but has a direct Tendency to encrease the *Power* of the *Crown*, by procuring the *Good* of the *Subject*. We have made it clear, that the mixing these *noble Views* with *personal Resentments*, is the only means by which they can be *defeated*, and this has enabled us to *explain* what to so many has seemed *inexplicable*, the short turn made by *those* who in the midst of their *Professions* of their intending only the *former*, were in their *Hearts* resolved to proceed no farther than the *latter*. By doing this, we have done our utmost to establish *the Opposition* for the future on its *proper Basis*, to point out the *Advantages* it may procure to the *Nation*, and the Necessity there is of *procuring them* some way or other, if we mean *well* to the *Nation*, and therefore we presume, that we have effectually executed what our *Title* promised, and that within the narrow Compass of this *Discourse*, the candid Reader will find the *Case of the Opposition impartially stated*.

